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ADDRESS BY DR. HEMAN HUMPHREY, A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DELIVERED AT WESTFIELD, AT THE DEDICATION OF THE NORMAL SCHOOLHOUSE, SEPTEMBER 3, 1846.

[Continued from page 80.]

HER great men have commenced their education in the common schoolhouse. And "the thing that hath been is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done, as one generation passeth and another cometh." In less than half a century, all the professions in our noble State will be filled, all the offices will be held, all the business will be done, and nearly all the property will be owned, by the boys who first graduate at our Common Schools, and whose parents are too poor to give them a better education. It will be so as long as these schools are sustained and open to all; and they will do more or less to elevate the moral and intellectual character of the people, as the teachers are thoroughly or superficially educated. Every faithful and well-qualified instructor in the humblest district school is a public benefactor. But where shall the school committees look for a sufficient number of such, till Teachers' Seminaries furnish them?

It is not so well considered as it should be, that education is both a science and an art. Though not one of the exact sciences, it rests on deep and complicated elementary principles, and calls for a more careful study of the early susceptibilities and operations of the human mind than any other science. Every child has, if I may so speak, *three* natures, - a physical, a mental, and a moral, between which there are mysterious sympathies and connections, that reciprocally govern and are governed. He has organs of sense, which are the inlets of knowledge, and without which he could not learn any thing, however skilful the teacher. He would still have a mind, but it would be a prisoner, groping hopelessly in a dungeon. He has perception, reason, memory, and imagination. He can learn and apply rules, understand propositions, and in simple examples see the connection between premises and conclusions.

He can be stimulated and swayed by motives, and is peculiarly alive to their influence. He is susceptible of a great variety of opposite emotions, — of hope and fear; of joy and sorrow; of love and hatred. But I need not enumerate. Every child in the primary school has a moral as well as a rational nature, — has a *conscience*. He can discern between good and evil. He knows the difference between right and wrong; between truth and falsehood. In short, he has within him all the elements of high responsibility; all the noble faculties of an accountable and immortal being. But these faculties are yet to be unfolded, to be cultivated, to be *educated*. The understanding needs it. The memory needs it. The imagination needs it. The conscience and the heart need it.

This is what I mean by education as an *art*; and the art here, as in most other cases, is founded upon the science. It is seizing upon the elements and reducing them to order, — it is arranging and applying fundamental principles. It is moulding the mind and stimulating it to high and noble aims. It is drawing out its powers, teaching it its own strength, and making it work, as the incumbent atmosphere does the steam-engine. In fine, it is the art of educating the whole man, of symmetrically cultivating all the powers and faculties of the pupil's mind, and training him up to the love and practice of all the virtues. In this view, education holds a high, if not the highest rank among the liberal and useful arts. But it is no more intuitive than any of them. The art of educating, as well as every other art, must be studied, must be learned. Though it be not essential that every schoolmaster should be a profound intellectual and moral philosopher, it is necessary that he should understand what the motive power in the child's mind is, and how to reach it.

It would be mere common-place to add that no one can teach what he does not understand himself. He may try; and when he gets fairly swamped, he may look as wise as an owl upon a hollow tree. He may blunder along over the recitation like a bewildered militia-man in an enemy's country, and bless himself that he has got through some how or other; but this is not *teaching*. It is mumbling and hesitating; and, in the last resort, knocking a difficulty on the head as an impudent intruder, or shying round it as if it lay coiled and hissing in his path, like a serpent. It seems to be strangely overlooked, in many quarters, even to this day, that a competent education for teaching embraces a great deal more than a general and superficial knowledge of spelling, reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and geography. But really it is time for every body to understand the difference between smattering in school, six hours a day, and teaching thoroughly, accurately, in all the studies. Every branch should, if possible, be as familiar to the instructor as the first lessons in the child's reader. If it

is not at his tongue's end, he labors under very great embarrassment. He has no time to study out the lessons as he goes along. He needs to be as sure and prompt as a percussion lock. He *must* be, in order to do full justice to his school.

Just consider for a moment what is required of him, every day and every hour. In the first place, the school is to be brought under strict subordination before he can begin to teach. Half a hundred children, often more, of all ages, are to be *governed*, or they will soon govern him, as they do their parents at home. Even after his authority is established, it requires the eyes of an Argus to keep them in subjection and close to their studies. This, of itself, would be a laborious task. Let any one who doubts and theorizes, try it, and he will see. But it is a trifle compared with what the sole teacher of a large district school has to do. Look in upon him, and judge for yourselves. He must hear from five to ten classes in as many different branches before the clock strikes twelve, and must do it in the midst of constant interruptions. Mr. A., may I go to the fire, — may I go out, — may I get some snow and put into my ink, — may I go home and get my slate? Mr. A., will you mend my pen, — will you show me how to do this sum? I have worked upon it two hours, and it won't come right no-how. I wonder what such hard sums were made for. Mr. A., Sam pinched me. Mr. A., Ben keeps pulling my hair. Mr. A., Mr. A., Bill studies so loud that I can't get my lesson. Mr. A., what time is it? Mother says I must go home at three o'clock, and do the chores.

These are a few specimens of the thousand and one questions and other interruptions by which the teacher of a Common School is harassed from morning to night, till his patience is worn threadbare. What, then, in the mean time, is to become of his recitations? The classes must go on in spite of all this, if they are to read, and spell, and recite at all. The sun will not stop for the pens to be mended, nor for the tongues to cease. Woe to the master who cannot attend to more than one or two things at once! If, when a class gets up to read, he is obliged to take the book and follow them, line by line, to see whether they call the words right and mind the stops, as I have sometimes myself witnessed, who will keep the school in order, and all the rest of the machinery in gear and in motion? Poor man! how I pity him from the bottom of my heart! and how I pity the school too! So when he calls up a class in grammar, or in arithmetic, if he is obliged to direct his whole attention to the lesson; if the slightest transposition or anomaly in the construction of a sentence sends him to his accidence to puzzle it out, while the whole class is waiting, dubious of his success; or if the nine digits, with their characteristic obstinacy, bring him to a dead stand in some of the

common rules, and oblige him to adjourn the recitation over night, what, in the mean time, must become of all the other exercises and interests of the school? If any teacher in the world needs to have every thing by heart, it is the teacher of a Common School. He has so many classes, so many branches, so many wheels to keep in motion, so many things to divide his attention, that, if he is not thoroughly educated himself, it is impossible for him to do justice to those who are committed to his care. It may be no fault of his that he is deficient in some, or even in all the branches of popular education. He may never have been thoroughly instructed himself. Considering his limited advantages, he may do better than could have been expected; but such a man will feel his deficiencies, and the school will suffer in spite of his best endeavors.

What, then, is to be done? Where and how are our schoolmasters and schoolmistresses to be better educated? There is no want of the material. We have young men and young women enough in Massachusetts who would prove themselves worthy of the highest public confidence as teachers, if they could but be regularly trained to the profession. But while all admit that there is a great demand for more thoroughly qualified teachers in the public schools, some suppose that it can be fully met by the colleges and academies of the State. I have no disposition to undervalue these seminaries. They are the glory of the Commonwealth.

No one will dispute the ability of our colleges to give just such an education as every schoolmaster wants. They are furnished with the ablest instructors, and teach many things which are far in advance of what the public schools require. But the colleges have no teachers' department, and do not pretend to qualify their graduates and undergraduates for common schoolmasters. Some of them teach the winter schools, to be sure; and it seems to be taken for granted, that because they have studied Greek and Latin, and Conic Sections, they must know all about the branches of Common School education. This is one of the best examples of *non sequitur* that I can think of. Because a young man can read Demosthenes and calculate eclipses, he must be eminently qualified to teach a primary school! It is no disparagement to some of the best classical scholars to say, that they are not fit for common schoolmasters. They are above the employment, but not equal to it. They can educate teachers a great deal better than they can teach the a-b-abs, and "When the sky falls, we shall catch larks." Experience abundantly proves that many who go from college halls to try their hand in district schoolhouses, are greatly surpassed by some who never saw a college in their lives; and if it were the main object of a collegiate education

to furnish schoolmasters, every one must see how very inadequate would be the supply.

The academies can do more than the colleges in educating teachers, and they are entitled to a great deal of credit for what they have done ; but something more is wanted. While I cannot agree with those on the one hand, who speak disparagingly of our academies, as teachers' seminaries, I am equally unable, on the other, to coincide with those who think we need no other class of Teachers' Institutes. The truth, it seems to me, lies between these two extremes. Let the academies do what they can. There is room for their most strenuous endeavors, without interfering at all with the recent movement on the part of benevolent individuals and the State in the same direction. If a sufficient number of Teachers' Seminaries could be established to educate all the schoolmasters and mistresses that are wanted, the case would be different. But when we remember that there are more than *three thousand* school districts in Massachusetts, requiring almost double the number of teachers, (including winter and summer schools,) it seems as if every one must see that the agency of the academies in helping to furnish them cannot be dispensed with. Let those of them which already have teachers' departments make them still more thorough, and let others come into the same arrangement. Still, there will be ample room for another class of seminaries, conveniently located in different parts of the Commonwealth, exclusively devoted to the education of teachers, both male and female.

Our three State Normal Schools are just these seminaries. Their sole object is to raise the standard of popular education by furnishing the Public Schools with abler teachers than they now have, or can have, without some such provision. Leaving to our excellent academies the task of fitting young men for college, and for the various departments of business, they propose to take as many promising youth of both sexes as they can accommodate, and qualify them thoroughly for teaching. This, and this only, is what the Normal Schools propose ; and it is too plain to need argument, that, with good accommodations and able teachers, they can do more than the academies and high schools in this particular department. They must do more to entitle themselves to public confidence and patronage.

Are they, then, just such Teachers' Seminaries as we want ? Let us visit them and see. The accommodations are ample, and all the arrangements highly convenient. The buildings are new and handsome. The grounds are inviting, and such ornaments as time alone can add, will make them still more so. The locations are healthful, and far removed from dangerous allurements. The Principals are men who have distinguished themselves as able and successful teachers in the Common

Schools, and their assistants are selected with special regard to the requisite qualifications. By the wise and liberal policy of the State, tuition is free. Every branch of Common School education is taught, and much more thoroughly taught, than, for the want of time, any of these branches can be in our best academies. Let those who doubt it go into one of these Normal Schools, and witness the drilling, and listen to the recitations, for a single forenoon, and judge for themselves. No scholar escapes; no one can be superficial or hesitate without being made to feel it to the quick. The design is to make prompt and able teachers, by giving line upon line and precept upon precept; to make them so familiar with the whole range of studies, that when they come to take charge of the schools, they shall never be at a loss, never keep a class waiting while they turn over books to refresh their own memories. The object is, as far as practicable, to make every teacher as true and quick as steel; and this cannot be done but by severe drilling, by waking up the mind to its best efforts, and keeping it wide awake from morning to night. To be a first-rate schoolmaster, a man must be able to attend to twenty things at once. To this end, he must be perfectly at home in all the studies, as I have before said; and I am satisfied there is no such place for getting armed and equipped at all points, as in a good Normal School. If any branch is superficially taught in these schools, it must be the fault of the Principal or his assistants; and if any incompetent or unfaithful instructor should ever be retained, it will be the fault of the Board of Education.

But something more is necessary to furnish the best class of teachers, than the thorough instruction of which I have spoken, and much more is actually done in the Normal Schools. The best methods of teaching, and of the management and government of Common Schools, are made prominent topics of familiar lectures and conversation. And to make these instructions in the highest degree practical, each of our Normal Schools has what is called a Model Primary School attached to it, where, in turn, the Normal scholars have opportunity to try their skill in teaching and governing, under the general superintendence of the Principal. Besides all this, public sentiment demands that the Bible should be made a text book; and every Principal is expected to give moral lectures and religious instruction, weekly, if not daily, in the schoolroom. While the Board, under whose control the State has placed this and the other Normal Schools, would not countenance any mere sectarian obtrusion on the part of the instructors, they would not, I am persuaded, continue any one in his place who should reject the Christian Scriptures, or omit to inculcate their divine precepts upon those who are to be the future teachers of our Common Schools. Mere neutrality in religion on the part of any Principal, were absolute neutrality possible,

would not be tolerated, I am sure, by the present Board. And if I thought the day would ever come when the high and eternal sanctions of the Christian religion should no longer be held up in the Normal Schools, my fervent prayer would be, that then "one stone might not be left upon another."

I have spoken thus far upon the direct agency which well-managed Normal Schools must needs have in raising the standard of popular education through the teachers whom they educate; but if they succeed, there will be an *indirect* influence, equally auspicious, if not more so. The public expect, and have a right to expect, that they will send out *model teachers*; not that all will be superior to those who have gone before them; but that some, that *many* will excel, in proportion to their superior advantages; and that their better and more thorough methods of instruction will be copied by other teachers. This is the order of nature in the progress of all human improvements. The few who are most highly endowed, or best instructed, are looked up to as models by the masses in every community. The fortunate inventor of a labor-saving machine, or the discoverer of some new principle in physical science, is a public benefactor, even though he should not teach one in a thousand the use of the machine or the application of the principle. The man who invents a new and improved model of a steam-engine, or builds a better water-wheel than any before in use, or brings out from his power-loom a handsomer and more substantial fabric than any other manufacturer, or makes a cheaper and better button, while he fills his own pockets, virtually teaches a thousand others how to do the same thing. The model, or the article manufactured, is before them, and their own eyes and ingenuity do the rest. So it is in all the useful and ornamental arts; so it is in agriculture; so it is in building bridges and making roads. A single turnpike, passing through a section of country where the scraper had never been seen before, will, in a short time, wonderfully improve all the cross roads for miles and miles on both sides of it. It is the *model* road for all the highway surveyors far and near. So with the agricultural school. Though the pupils may be few in number, yet when they come to be scattered abroad over the farming districts, they will not only teach others what they have been taught themselves, but thousands will watch their improved methods of cultivation, and profit by them.

The same thing is true in popular education. The public are benefited, both directly and indirectly, by every improved method of instruction. Though the teachers from the Normal Schools should, for some years to come, bear but a small proportion to the whole number of schoolmasters and mistresses in the Commonwealth, while they will be raising up a class of teachers under their own improved and thorough

methods of instruction, just so far as they rise above the ordinary level, their schools will become model schools for all the neighboring districts. Every valuable improvement in teaching and governing will in time be copied, and thus the indirect agency of the Normal Schools, in raising the standard of general education, will be extended far beyond the limits of their direct and immediate influence.

I am aware that these anticipations may be regarded as quite too sanguine by some who take a deep interest in the improvement of our Public Schools. They may demand of us how much the Common Schools have yet been benefited by the Normal Seminaries, and, because their expectations have not been answered, may set down the experiment as but little short of a failure. But they ought in fairness to consider that there has not yet been time enough to test it. It was commenced but seven years ago, and under several disadvantages. We had no teachers who had themselves been trained up under the system. When they began, they had much to learn, as well as every thing to teach. And they had no suitable accommodations. It is only the last year that the first school-house was built, and the other two are now just finished. Teachers cannot be thoroughly educated in a few months under the best system that ever was devised. A regular course requires two or three years of close study. But few have enjoyed the advantages of the system at all; and the most highly favored have not had time to show what they can do since they left the schools and began to teach. It would be quite unreasonable, therefore, to judge of the adaptation of the Normal System to the wants of our Public Schools, by what has already been accomplished. Give it a fair trial, and if it does not meet the reasonable expectations of an enlightened public, let it be abandoned.

The great difficulty hitherto has been to keep the pupils long enough in professional training. The Board have done what they could by their recommendations and by-laws. The Secretary and the Principals have exhausted their persuasions, I will not say in vain, but without any thing like that degree of success which they have fairly earned. We are obliged to confess, that in this respect we have been disappointed. We did suppose that fine accommodations, free tuition, and the best instruction, would be sufficient inducements, not only to fill up the schools, but to secure attendance for a reasonable length of time. In this, I say, we have been disappointed. Many have remained but a single term, but few have given themselves time for the whole course, and the Normal Schools have been held answerable for their deficiencies. This is unreasonable. Nobody ever pretended that the new system could work miracles,—that coming in at one door and going out at the other would make good teachers.

The Normal Schools claim no supernatural advantages over other seminaries. Thorough training for any profession is a slow and arduous process. The Board of Education are extending the time as fast as public sentiment will sustain them; and they hope to be able, within a reasonable period, to make it a condition that those who enter shall remain long enough to reap all the substantial advantages which the system offers.

But notwithstanding these disadvantages, those who have had the best opportunities for judging and comparing will bear us out in claiming, that many of the teachers from the Normal Seminaries have distinguished themselves already in the primary schools, and are giving still brighter promise, from year to year, of what may be expected hereafter. Where they can be had, the Normal trained teachers are generally preferred; and experience, with some exceptions, no doubt, justifies the preference.

Let it not be said or surmised that this is a scheme to drive other worthy teachers from the schools. It is rather to aid them and add to their numbers. They cannot be spared. Not one district in ten could obtain a teacher from a Normal School, if ever so much disposed, and for a long time yet to come the great majority must be trained elsewhere. Let them be trained. Let the most strenuous efforts be made by other seminaries to raise the standard of popular education, by furnishing better qualified schoolmasters and mistresses than have yet been raised up, and we will rejoice in the highest measure of their success. Let a competent number of well-educated teachers be provided, through whatever agency, and the Board will mingle their congratulations with all who labor in the same noble cause.

Friends of popular education, — as I am sure you all are, — ministers, laymen, parents, teachers, school committees, let me stir you up to your duties. A nobler field for action, for educational labors and improvements than our own beloved Commonwealth furnishes, the sun does not shine upon. A richer legacy than our religious institutions and Common Schools never came down from a wise and pious ancestry. Some things can be done up and then dismissed as requiring no further care or labor; but it is not so with education. Like household work, it is always returning and never done.

We have none the less to do because our fathers did so much, nor will our children be eased of the burden by our highest efforts to raise the standard. All the toil is to be gone over again by each successive generation. It is a circle which returns upon itself, and will continue to return to the end of time. The procession of children coming upon the stage has no end. Wait we ever so long, it will not pass by. When we depart, they will still be coming, and in closer ranks than ever. Those

who are centuries behind will surely come, and the great business of every generation will be to educate the children of the next. What, therefore, our hands find to do, let us do it with our might.

Citizens of Westfield, we congratulate you upon your educational enterprise and privileges. Few towns in the Commonwealth have acted upon a wiser forecast. Besides your primary schools, with doors wide open to every child, however poor, you have one of the oldest and most flourishing academies in the State; — not waxing and waning, as many do, but always flourishing under able teachers and a supervision which forbids its decline. With these high advantages you might have rested satisfied. But when the western Normal School was to be permanently located, you entered into an honorable competition for the additional facilities which it would bring to your doors. Favored by your natural advantages, and entitling yourselves by liberal subscriptions to the preference, you succeeded. The school which had been for some time suspended was brought here, and reöpened with temporary accommodations, and now this new and beautiful edifice is to receive it. Much will it depend on your coöperation with the Board and with the teachers for its prosperity. Upon your aid in accommodating the scholars from abroad on reasonable terms, and guarding them against those moral dangers which so easily beset the young, we confidently rely. You will not disappoint this expectation. You will cherish this seminary as you do your schools and academy. To the cause of good learning we dedicate it. To the care and benediction of Heaven we commend it. May it more than answer the sanguine hopes of its projectors, in furnishing teachers of a high order for many generations.

TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

To the Board of Education;

GENTLEMEN; —

IN submitting my TENTH ANNUAL REPORT, I have some encouraging facts to communicate.

The Abstracts of the Massachusetts School Returns furnish us, from year to year, with a kind of evidence in regard to the condition of our Public Schools, whose general authenticity cannot be questioned. By comparing one year with another, it is no longer doubtful that these schools, in most of the essentials of prosperity, have acquired a strong headway in the right direction.

As is well known, one portion of each volume of the Abstract consists of statistical facts, originally noted down from half day to half day, in the schoolroom itself, in a Register prepared for the purpose. At the end of each year, these registers are delivered into the hands of the school committees of the respective towns. The committees ascertain the aggregates of the daily entries; they insert them in a blank sheet prepared for the purpose, and then forward them to the Secretary of State for the use of the Board of Education. Under the direction of the Board, they are collated and condensed into tables; printed, and presented to the Legislature and to the public. The most important items contained in these documents are reported by the committees under the sanction of an oath.

Another portion of the Abstracts originates in the following manner: At the close of the year, when the school committees are about to surrender their office into the hands of their constituents, they are required by law to make a "detailed report" of the condition of the schools they have superintended, specifying deficiencies and suggesting improvements. Copies of these reports are forwarded to the seat of government for the use of the Board, and from these copies selections are made and printed as a part of the Abstract.

Considering the official and personal obligations under which the reports and returns are made, together with the general intelligence of the committees who make them, and the care with which they are subsequently transcribed and consolidated, this class of documents has a reliable and authentic character which cannot be gainsaid. Their results are arguments which must convince scepticism and give sight to the blindness of unbelief.

From these, and also from collateral and corroborative testimony, it is now evident that a steady and strong impulse is urging our schools forward in the career of improvement. It is providing better houses for their accommodation. It is slowly but gradually supplying some of their most pressing wants for apparatus. The annual appropriations for their support are more liberal. Teachers are better qualified, both in mind and in heart, for their sacred work. Parents are more interested in the schools. As the fruit and harvest of all this, the methods of instruction are becoming more philosophical, and of course more successful; and as the principles of school discipline are better understood, it follows as a necessary consequence that better order should be preserved and a higher degree of diligence secured.

One fact long since attracted my attention, and the observation of successive years has deepened the impression it originally made. Whenever a controversy has arisen, whether in a town or in a school district, between the party of Progress and

the party of Inertia or Stand-still, — between those who urge forward and those who hold back, — the former, with very few exceptions, has prevailed ; and the excepted cases are those in which the struggle is yet pending. These contests, between those whose faces look forward and those whose faces are turned backward, have sometimes been amicable, sometimes excited and not unmingled with passion ; but almost universally they have eventuated in a reform, and not unfrequently the reform has reformed its original opponents, by converting them into its friends.

SCHOOLHOUSES.

At first, and most frequently, these contests arose in regard to the reëdification of schoolhouses. For years the condition of this class of edifices throughout the State, taken as a whole, had been growing worse and worse. Time and decay were always doing their work, while only here and there, with wide spaces between, was any notice taken of their silent ravages ; and in still fewer instances were these ravages repaired. Hence, notwithstanding the improved condition of all other classes of buildings, general dilapidation was the fate of these. Industry, and the increasing pecuniary ability which it creates, had given comfort, neatness, and even elegance to private dwellings. Public spirit had erected commodious and costly churches. Counties, though largely taxed, had yet uncomplainingly paid for handsome and spacious courthouses and public offices. Humanity had been at work, and had made generous and noble provision for the pauper, the blind, the deaf and dumb, the insane. Even jails and houses of correction, — the receptacles of felons and other offenders against the laws of God and man, — had, in many instances, been transformed, by the more enlightened spirit of the age, into comfortable and healthful residences. The Genius of architecture, as if she had made adequate provision for all mankind, extended her sheltering care over the brute creation. Better stables were provided for cattle, better folds for sheep, and even the unclean beasts felt the improving hand of reform. But in the mean time, the schoolhouses, to which the children should have been wooed by every attraction, were suffered to go where age and the elements would carry them.

In 1837, not one third part of the public schoolhouses in Massachusetts would have been considered tenable by any decent family, out of the poorhouse or in it. As an incentive to neatness and decency, children were sent to a house whose walls and floors were indeed painted, but they were painted all too thickly by smoke and filth ; whose benches and doors were covered with carved work, but they were the gross and obscene carvings of impure hands ; whose vestibule, after the Oriental fashion, was converted into a veranda, but the metamorphosis

which changed its architectural style, consisted in laying it bare of its outer covering. The modesty and chastity of the sexes, at their tenderest age, were to be cultivated and cherished in places which oftentimes were as destitute of all suitable accommodations as a camp or a caravan. The brain was to be worked amid gases that stupefied it. The virtues of generosity and forbearance were to be acquired where sharp discomfort and pain tempted each one to seize more than his own share of relief, and thus to strengthen every selfish propensity.

At the time referred to, the schoolhouses in Massachusetts were an opprobrium to the State; and if there be any one who thinks this expression too strong, he may satisfy himself of its correctness by inspecting some of the few specimens of them which still remain.

The earliest effort at reform was directed towards this class of buildings. By presenting the idea of taxation, this measure encountered the opposition of one of the strongest passions of the age. Not only the sordid and avaricious, but even those whose virtue of frugality, by the force of habit, had been imperceptibly sliding into the vice of parsimony, felt the alarm. Men of fortune without children, and men who had reared a family of children and borne the expenses of their education, fancied they saw something of injustice in being called to pay for the education of others; and too often their fancies started up into spectres of all imaginable oppression and wrong. The school districts were the scene where the contending parties arrayed themselves against each other; the schoolhouse itself their arena. From time immemorial, it had been the custom to hold school district meetings in the schoolhouse. Hither, according to ancient usage, the voters were summoned to come. In this forum the question was to be decided, whether a new edifice should be erected, or whether the ability of the old one to stand upon its foundations for another season should be tried. Regard for the health, the decent manners, the intellectual progress and the moral welfare of the children, common humanity, policy, duty, the highest worldly interests of the race, were marshalled on one side, demanding a change; selfishness, cupidity, insensibility to the wants and the welfare of others, and that fallacious plea, that because the schoolhouse had answered the purpose so long, therefore it would continue to answer it still longer, — an argument which would make all houses, and roads, and garments, and every thing made by human hands, last forever, — resisted the change. The disgraceful contrast between the schoolhouse and all other edifices, whether public or private, in its vicinity; the immense physical and spiritual sacrifices which its condition inflicted upon the rising generation, were often and unavailingly urged; but there was always one argument which the advocates of reform

could use with irresistible effect, —the schoolhouse itself. Cold winds, whistling through crannies, and chinks, and broken windows, told with merciless effect upon the opponents. The ardor of opposition was cooled by snow-blasts rushing up through the floor. Pain-imparting seats made it impossible for the objectors to listen patiently even to arguments on their own side ; and it was obvious that the tears they shed were less attributable to any wrongs which they feared, than to the volumes of smoke which belched out with every gust of wind from broken funnels and chimneys. Such was the case in some houses. In others, opposite evils prevailed ; and the heat and stifling air and nauseating effluvia were such as a grown man has hardly been compelled to live in since the time of Jonah.

Though insensible to arguments addressed to reason and conscience, yet the senses, and muscles, and nerves of this class of men were less hardened than their hearts ; and the colds and cramps, the exhaustion and debility, which they carried home, worked mightily for their conversion to truth. Under such circumstances, persuasion soon became compulsory.

Could the leaders of the opposition have transferred the debate to some commodious public hall, or to their own spacious and elegant mansions, they might have bid defiance to humanity and remained masters of the field. But the party of reform held them relentlessly to the battle-ground ; and there the cause of progress triumphed on the very spot where it had been so long dishonored.

During the five years immediately succeeding the report communicated by the Board of Education to the Legislature, on the subject of schoolhouses, the sums expended for the erection or repair of this class of buildings fell but little short of *seven hundred thousand dollars*. Since that time, from the best information obtained, I suppose the sum expended on this one item to be about *one hundred and fifty thousand dollars annually*. Every year adds some new improvement to the construction and arrangement of these edifices.

In regard to this great change in schoolhouses, — it would hardly be too much to call it a *revolution*, — the school committees have done an excellent work, — or rather, they have begun it ; — it is not yet done. Their annual reports, read in open town meeting, or printed and circulated among the inhabitants, afterwards embodied in the Abstracts and distributed to all the members of the government, to all towns and school committees, have enlightened and convinced a State.

INCREASED APPROPRIATIONS.

Both in point of importance and of time, the next great remedial measure attempted was an increase in the appropriations for the support of schools. In 1837, only a few of the

Public Schools in the State were kept during the whole year. The average compensation given to teachers, — especially to female teachers, — was disreputably low. For the purpose of increasing the length of the schools and of adding to the compensation of teachers, it became necessary to enlarge the annual appropriations. There are but few towns in the State which have not materially increased these appropriations; and in almost every town the increase has been effected in spite of the opposition of a greater or smaller number of tax-payers. In some instances, the struggle has been long and arduous; but in all, or very nearly all, the party of progress has prevailed. The result is, that the expenditures for the three items of teachers' wages and board, and fuel for the schools, which, in 1837, did not amount to \$400,000 per annum, had reached, in 1845, the sum of \$611,652; and including the Surplus Revenue, appropriated to the same object, it was \$620,045 12; — being an increase of more than \$220,000.

This is an increase of *fifty-five* per cent. in the appropriations, while, during the same time, the number of children between the ages of 4 and 16 years has increased but *fifteen* per cent.

One most remarkable principle has been illustrated in every contest for raising more money, whether for the erection of schoolhouses or for increasing the length or the value of the schools. The more ignorant and uneducated voters, for whose especial benefit the improved means of education were designed, have uniformly arrayed themselves among the opponents. Though assessed for nothing but a poll-tax, they have resisted grants, in whose benefits they would have been equal sharers with the largest tax-payers. The opposition to improvement has been made up of a few wealthy leaders, with many times more than their own number of ignorant and deluded followers. This shows in a striking manner how dangerous it is to suffer a class of ignorant people to grow up in the community. They are like movable ballast in a ship, always on the wrong side, and always most dangerous in the greatest crises of danger. When a man contemns or neglects the means of education, he has become so ignorant that he does not know how ignorant he is. Such men are not merely their own enemies, but they are the natural enemies of all who love knowledge.

FEMALE TEACHERS.

Another very striking change which has taken place within the last ten years, consists in the employment of an increased proportion of female teachers.

The regular advance in the employment of females as teachers of our schools is shown by the following table: —

| Year. | | No. of Male Teachers. | | No. of Female Teachers. |
|---------|---|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1837 | - | 2370 | - | 3591 |
| 1838-9 | - | 2411 | - | 3825 |
| 1839-40 | - | 2378* | - | 3928* |
| 1840-41 | - | 2491 | - | 4112 |
| 1841-2 | - | 2500 | - | 4282 |
| 1842-3 | - | 2414* | - | 4301* |
| 1843-4 | - | 2529 | - | 4581 |
| 1844-5 | - | 2595 | - | 4700 |
| 1845-6 | - | 2585 | - | 4997 |

Hence it appears that the number of female teachers in our schools is now almost twice the number of males. The regularity of this increase shows the soundness and stability of the principle on which it is advancing. The Normal Schools have contributed greatly to this most desirable result; and in this way alone, — that is, by substituting the cheaper and better services of females, — they have already saved the State a great proportion of all the money they have cost. A *man* may keep a difficult school by means of authority and physical force; a *woman* can do it only by dignity of character, affection, and such a superiority in attainment as is too conspicuous to be questioned. It is the possession of the latter qualities which has enabled so many of our females to keep winter schools, and thus increased the relative number of female teachers to a degree so surprising.

* The returns for these years were not quite complete.

[To be continued.]

SCHOOL BOOKS.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PRIMARY READER OF RUSSELL'S ELEMENTARY SERIES. By WILLIAM RUSSELL. Boston: Charles Tappan. 1847.

PRIMARY READER. A Selection of Easy Reading Lessons, with Introductory Exercises in Articulation, for young Classes. By WILLIAM RUSSELL. Improved Edition. Boston: Charles Tappan. 1847.

✉ *All Communications to the Editor to be addressed to West Newton, Mass.*

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